



St Patrick's Early Years Outside Play Policy 'May Christ Be Seen In Us'

'Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge.' (Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage).

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The safeguarding and welfare requirements, specified in this section, are designed to help providers create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. Providers must ensure that, so far as is reasonable, the facilities, equipment and access to the premises are suitable for children with disabilities. Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area or, if that is not possible, ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis (unless circumstances make this inappropriate, for example unsafe weather conditions).' (Statutory Framework - 2012)

It is said that children who begin their education in a learning environment that is purposeful, challenging and supportive stand the best chance of developing into confident and successful learners. Effective learning environments are created over time as a result of staff and parents working together, thinking and talking about children's learning and planning how to promote it.

Aims for our outdoor environment

- To provide a stimulating, challenging, safe, secure environment for children to play and learn with enjoyment
- To plan outdoor learning experiences which complement and extend indoor provision and are stimulating and varied
- To ensure children experience a broad balanced curriculum accessing the learning objectives across the seven developmental areas described in our Foundation Stage Curriculum
- To ensure learning outcomes are of equal importance to those taking place indoors and are planned to extend the children's learning
- To provide space/areas to take part in energetic, noisy, large-scale activities as well as opportunity for quieter, more reflective experiences
- To plan for a balance between child initiated activities and adult directed activities
- To plan opportunities for: problem solving, practising skills, conversation, investigation, exploration, inventiveness, creativity and imagination
- To ensure health and safety at all times e.g. area is supervised, equipment is checked regularly, parents are kept informed of issues e.g. sun awareness, suitable clothing

- Make good use of outdoor space so that children are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors

The outdoor area

The outdoor environment should be

- Inviting and stimulating
- Defined for children to understand the space
- Carefully planned for
- Monitored and evaluated
- Maintained and replenished
- Safe
- Clean and tidy

Equal opportunities and inclusion (including SEND and Gifted and Talented)

- We understand that it is crucial to treat all children with equal respect as individuals regardless of age, gender, ability, religion, race and ability.
- We understand that it is vital to prevent any obstacles that stop children from playing together. We are aware that each, individual child has his/her own needs and we aim to meet them in an inclusive way.
- The outdoor area is managed to provide learning opportunities for all abilities. We ensure all children with special educational needs and those on the gifted and talented register have provision suited to their needs and where appropriate match their IEP/statement objectives.

Management

- We encourage all members of staff to have a part in development of the outdoor area. We share responsibility for the monitoring of equipment, the provision of play equipment and the supervision of children at play. We understand that the outdoor area is an extension of the classroom and that any adult outside is involved in the children's play and development as they would be inside.
- As stated by the Statutory Framework our children '*must be within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing*', which we adhere to when the children are in all areas of our Foundation Stage setting.

Organisation and resources

- The Early Years teachers plan for the outdoor area. Equipment put out links to the areas of development (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and

Language, Physical development, Mathematical Development, Literacy, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts).

- All staff are involved in setting up the outdoor area wherever possible. Equipment used is taken from the outdoor bunkers and shed and put back correctly at the end of the week. At the end of each day staff ensure that equipment is brought inside and stored appropriately ready for the next day. All staff are responsible for up-keep of the outdoor area, ensuring that any spilt sand is swept up, scraps of paper are put in the bin etc.
- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the equipment used is rotated and evaluated regularly. All Early Years staff discuss how, and if, the equipment outside is being used and changes are made accordingly.
- All Early Years staff are continually looking at ways to improve and develop the outdoor area in order to provide the best opportunities and experiences for the children in our Foundation Stage.

Assessment

Outdoor play is monitored in terms of the children's learning. Assessment procedures for outdoor play are the same as those used inside during child initiated play. Any observations and assessments undertaken feed into the Foundation Stage Profiles.

Risk Assessment

- All staff are involved in the monitoring of the equipment outside. Staff record any broken equipment or damage to the outside area in the daily outdoor risk assessment file and site manager's record book for repair. All staff are involved in the up-keep of the outdoor area. We ensure the outdoor area is clean and tidy every morning before it is set up for the children.
- Construction equipment – adults closely supervise the use and safety of any construction equipment put outside. Adults demonstrate the use of any large equipment and explain safety rules to all children before use.
- Adults monitor the equipment to ensure they are not damaged.
- Plants and planters – adults ensure that plants and planters in the outdoor area are safe and secure. New plants and planters are shown to the children and children are made aware of how to respect and care for the plants and planters. If children are gardening then an adult supervises them and adults ensure that the children and area are clean and tidy when finished.
- Windows and doors – adults check daily the doors and windows to ensure that are secure and not damaged. Children are told to be careful of fingers when using doors and are told the importance of not throwing equipment etc.
- Gross motor skill equipment (e.g. hoops, bean bags, cups and cones) – adults closely supervise the use and safety of any gross motor skill equipment. The equipment is demonstrated to children before use and any rules are explained.

- Gazebo - This is usually used as a quiet area and the children are reminded of this. In the event of heavy rain, children are warned about possibility of slippery surfaces.

Policy date: September 2017

Policy to be reviewed: September 2018

S. Clark/ N Hughes

Reviewed *10/09/2018*